

CITY COUNCIL

Committee of the Whole

Monday, July 25, 2011

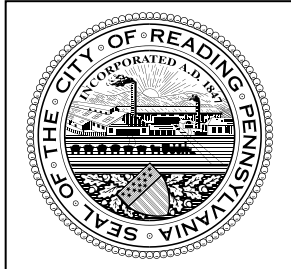
Council Office

5:00 pm

Agenda

Although Council committee meetings are open to the public, public comment is not permitted at Council Committee of the Whole meetings. However, citizens are encouraged to attend and observe the meetings. Comment from citizens or professionals during the meeting may be solicited on agenda topics via invitation by the President of Council.

- I. RAWA re purchase of Sinking Spring Sewer System**
- II. Weed and Seed Funding – F. Denbowski**
- III. Redistricting Advisory Committee**
- IV. Agenda Review**



COMMITTEE of the WHOLE

CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES
July 5 2011
5:00 P.M.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

S. Marmarou, M. Goodman-Hinnershitz, D. Reed, J. Waltman, D. Sterner

OTHERS PRESENT:

L. Kelleher, S. Katzenmoyer, F. Denbowski, C. Geffken, D. Kersley, K. Kulp, E. Weiss, S. Haver, T. Butler, T. McMahon, R. Natale

Mr. Waltman called the Committee of the Whole meeting to order at 5:12 p.m.

I. Certificate of Transfer

Mr. Weiss explained that Council staff identified 1,574 property transfers during 2010 that were lacking various permits. He stated that this is an extraordinary number and enforcement by Property Maintenance is very time consuming. He stated that this is an inefficient way to identify rental properties. The Certificate of Transfer process is meant to preempt the need for such extensive research and enforcement.

Mr. Weiss explained that the recordation of the deed cannot be delayed by the lack of a Certificate of Transfer but that the Recorder of Deeds has agreed to immediately notify the City when deeds are recorded without the Certificate of Transfer so enforcement can begin. The Certificate of Transfer will include items such as a health and safety inspection, the solid waste certification, the water certification, zoning district

identification, licenses and permits.

Mr. Weiss stated that most buyers are not complying with the need for a post-sale inspection. He stated that using the pre-sale inspection is not unusual. He explained that this process will not stop unauthorized uses but will greatly decrease enforcement after the fact. He stated that he has met with the Reading Berks Association of Realtors and they are very supportive of moving in this direction. He stated that these realtors have begun policing their own to prepare them for the Certificate of Transfer process. Most transactions are done through the assistance of a realtor and their cooperation is critical. The inspection will be scheduled within five days of notification that the property has been listed for sale and will not impede the real estate market.

Mr. Acosta arrived at this time.

Mr. Weiss explained that the inspection will focus on 14 items which are health and safety related. He stated that he has made the promise that the fee for the inspection will not become a cash cow for the City and that it will be adjusted annually to represent the real cost to the City. A flow chart showing the process was distributed to Council. It was explained that if a significant amount of work needs to be performed on a property that the potential buyer can sign a rehabilitation agreement to ensure that the work is completed within six months of purchase.

Mr. Marmarou noted the poor condition of some properties. He questioned if the buyer would be informed of pending codes issues at the property. Mr. Weiss stated that he is not familiar enough with realty law to answer that question but noted that transfer of the property would not stop the progress of pending citations.

Mr. Waltman stated that he has not yet reviewed the entire ordinance. He agreed that it was important for the realtors to support this initiative. He questioned if re-inspection was included in the fee if issues are found. Mr. Weiss explained that one re-inspection is included in the fee. There is an additional fee if multiple re-inspections are necessary.

Mr. Waltman questioned if any group was not in favor of this initiative. Mr. Weiss stated that the Real Estate Investors Association had one concern – the fee. He stated that this group has very strong opinions and that additional meetings with this group are needed.

Mr. Waltman questioned outstanding utilities. Ms. Kelleher explained that if a realtor and title company are assisting with the transaction, the outstanding utilities are paid at settlement. Mr. Weiss stated that outstanding utilities stay with the property and then become the responsibility of the new owner.

Mr. Waltman questioned if there was a penalty for not following the certification process. Mr. Weiss explained that the property would be inspected after notification by the Recorder of Deeds and problems found would become the responsibility of the buyer. He stated that the buyer must pursue legal actions against the seller to recoup costs.

Mr. Waltman questioned if the City had the operational capacity to begin this program. He questioned if there was confidence that Property Maintenance can manage the program. Mr. Weiss stated that the process needs to be built into Hansen for automation. He noted that two (2) Property Maintenance Inspectors and one (1) Fire Inspector are needed to perform the inspections. There is currently no one available in the Fire Department to perform the additional inspections.

Mr. Waltman stated that the rental housing process is also being studied and he questioned if beginning both programs would be too much to handle. Mr. Weiss explained that Property Maintenance will have two inspectors do nothing but certificate inspections. He stated that the computer system will automate the process. The staff will know their expectations.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz noted the need for an implementation plan and suggested that the ordinance be amended to include that the implementation will be reviewed in six months and an update provided to Council.

Mr. Sterner explained that Council is nervous about implementing housing strategies as there have been past failures. He noted that he is surer that the program will be successful this time. Mr. Weiss agreed and noted the need for this program to succeed.

Mr. McMahon stated that the list of items to be reviewed during the inspection is reasonable and that this program will greatly assist in the rehabilitation of the housing stock.

Ms. Reed stated that the City will soon be entering budget season and noted that personnel cuts are probable. She stated that Council must consider this program when working on the budget. Mr. Weiss stated that the program should be revenue neutral as the fee should cover the entire cost of the program, including personnel. He stated that this is a fee for a service and that City staff is carefully considering the program and he expressed his confidence that the program can work.

Mr. Acosta noted that cuts are a budget reality. He noted the need to hire fire personnel for the program and questioned what that salary would be. Mr. Weiss stated that he did not have a firm salary number but that the fee has been calculated on costs. He stated that the number of inspectors should be adjusted to the real estate market – fewer

people when the market is slow and vice versa.

Mr. Acosta noted the need to plan for the cost of the increased personnel.

Mr. Acosta questioned if title companies were contacted regarding this process. He stated that delays can cost the banking industry as well. He stated that he can arrange a settlement in as little as three days and noted the five day notice for the inspection. Mr. Weiss stated that he met with the Bankers Association and that they were not concerned with the five day time period. He stated that the ordinance can be amended to add that if the City does not respond, the inspection is deemed approved. He emphasized that settlement cannot be delayed. He clarified that the buyer or the real estate agent should be contacting the City as soon as the property is placed on the market. Ms. Kelleher explained that if the seller does not request the certificate the buyer must follow through after the purchase.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz suggested adding a new section five to require quarterly status reports to Council. She noted that the ordinance also reads that it will become effective in ten days and that the effective date should be changed to reflect when the program is ready to be implemented. She stated that the City cannot lose credibility again.

Mr. McMahon stated that a home can be on the market for extended periods of time and questioned the validity of an inspection over this extended time. Ms. Kelleher stated that section 305 number 6 addresses this and stated that the 24 month time period was based on input from the realtors.

Mr. Waltman stated that housing has many moving parts and requested a Committee of the Whole to focus on housing issues overall. He noted the need for the City's housing policies to address all neighborhoods.

Mr. Acosta questioned when Hansen would be updated for this initiative. Mr. Kersley stated that staff is working to turn manual processes into automated processes. He stated that he does not have a firm date at this time but staff is aware of what needs to be done.

Ms. Kelleher reminded Council that the City was successful with its former pre-settlement inspections but that Council repealed it after referendum was threatened.

Mr. Acosta stated that some buyers are requesting inspections now.

Council adjourned to Public Safety and Administrative Oversight Committees at 6 pm.

Council reconvened as Committee of the Whole at 6:30 pm.

II. Update from Olivet

Mr. DeGroote, Mr. Smith, and Mr. Olsen joined the meeting.

11th & Pike

Mr. Smith stated that Olivet is embracing its partnership with the City and is experienced and excited to move forward with programming at 11th & Pike playground. He stated that many in the County have given financial support to Olivet to ensure that summer programming continues in the City.

Mr. DeGroote described his past experience with City recreation and stated that this feels like a homecoming for him. He stated that in four days Olivet has hired three leaders and one supervisor to work at 11th & Pike. He stated that Matt Lubas and Heather Boyer have been very helpful. The program will begin on July 6 and will be held Monday through Friday from noon – 5 pm. He stated that programming will include field games, arts and crafts, indoor gym and game room events. He stated that the City has a rich history in recreation and noted the need for more playground associations.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz questioned the funding of the program. Mr. DeGroote stated that donors approached Olivet which negated the need for Olivet to solicit donations. He explained that the program will run for 5 1/2 weeks and that he worked with Mr. Lubas and Ms. Boyer to select the time of the program.

Mr. Marmarou suggested that this would be a good time to build a playground association at 11th & Pike. Mr. DeGroote agreed and stated that he would love for families to adopt their neighborhood parks and become more active in the neighborhoods. He commended John Gilmore for his work with the Gilmore Henne Foundation.

Mr. Marmarou noted the need for more people to be involved. Mr. Smith stated that Olivet will also be doing community outreach. Mr. DeGroote noted the need for parent driven organizations.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz thanked the City and the Reading Eagle for communicating the needs to the public. She noted the need for partnerships. Mr. DeGroote stated that the kids need fun activities.

Mr. Waltman agreed that recreation is critical. Mr. DeGroote invited all to visit the

program.

Mr. Waltman noted the importance of having playgrounds and open spaces. He stated that this shows the youth that adults care about them and can be positive role models.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz suggested that 11th & Pike work with Pendora to hold a Lantern Parade.

Pendora Park

Mr. Olsen stated that Olivet has proposed a new building at Pendora Park. He stated that Olivet programs follow a very specific model and that the Oakbrook facility was used as a foundation. He explained that the current Olivet site in East Reading is no longer feasible. The Oakbrook facility is approximately 14,000 square feet including administrative offices. The proposed design for Pendora Park would be approximately 12,000 square feet.

Mr. Olsen explained that he visited the park and stated that the building would not fit appropriately as an addition to the current field house, noting that the field house is in very good condition. He suggested building along the S 19th St side of the park at the site of the current large pavilion. The building would be one story and would follow the bluff area. The design includes 40 parking spaces, 20 on each side of the building. The building would include a patio area where club members can observe games on the baseball field. The buildings would be made of steel frame and all mechanicals would be inside. The design uses much natural light. The foot print of the buildings would be 60' X 105' X 18' and 60' X 105' X 28'.

Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz explained that she held a community meeting at which it was clearly voiced that neighbors did not want the City to lose control of the baseball field, residents wanted continued free use of the park and for the current fieldhouse to remain. She stated that the City would lease a portion of the park to Olivet. She stated that Mr. Younger has addressed the deed restrictions and that this use would be allowed. She stated that she will be holding another meeting in late July to update the neighborhood. She noted the need to continue dialog as this is a major change to the park and to the neighborhood.

Mr. Marmarou questioned who would maintain the baseball field. Mr. McMahon stated that the City would continue to maintain the baseball field.

Mr. Marmarou stated that Pendora Park is very marshy and questioned if this was taken into consideration. Mr. Olsen stated that it was and that the bluff area is the highest point of the park. He stated that test boring would be performed to ensure

there would be no problems and that the site he has chosen would be the least intrusive to the rest of the park.

Mr. Sterner questioned who would maintain the current fieldhouse. Mr. McMahon stated that the City would maintain this building and encouraged the soon to be formed Recreation Commission to use it for programming. Mr. Olsen stated that the building needs upgrades to the rest room area but that the building is very sound. He stated that the multi-purpose room with the two large fireplaces is awesome and that these types of buildings are not seen much anymore. Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz explained that the stone taken from the City prison was used to build the fieldhouse.

Mr. Waltman voiced his support of the project. He stated that he liked the large windows to allow the park into the building. He stated that if the need is there that the project should move forward. Mr. DeGroote noted his hope that Olivet would partner with the Recreation Commission.

Ms. Reed stated that she thinks this is a great idea.

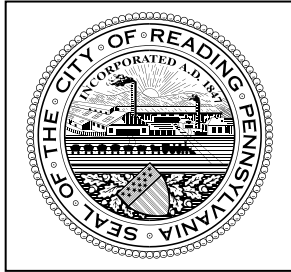
Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz expressed hope that the City would purchase the land across S 19th St to add to Pendora Park. She questioned if any large trees would be removed during the building process. Mr. Olsen stated that several trees would be removed but that most would be trimmed and would remain.

Ms. Reed questioned replacing the pavilion. She also questioned if the play area in front of the pavilion would be lost. Mr. Olsen stated that the play area would remain and that the pavilion could be dismantled and relocated.

Mr. McMahon noted the continued problems with baseball players parking on S 18th St and suggested that this project include additional parking. Ms. Goodman-Hinnershitz explained that the City has already added parking but the players don't use it.

The meeting adjourned at 7:12 pm.

Respectfully
Submitted
Linda A. Kelleher, CMC
City Clerk



COMMITTEE of the WHOLE

CITY COUNCIL

MINUTES
July 11, 2011
5:00 P.M.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

D. Reed, S. Marmarou, D. Sterner, J. Waltman, V. Spencer

OTHERS PRESENT:

L. Kelleher, S. Katzenmoyer, F. Denbowski, C. Younger, J. Nagel

Mr. Spencer called the Committee of the Whole meeting to order at 5:10 p.m.

I. Major System Repair Program Amendment

Ron Miller from Neighborhood Housing Services (NHS) joined the meeting at this time.

Mr. Spencer reminded Council of the extension of the Centre Park area to enjoin the Ricktown area. He noted the need for clarification about the areas which would be eligible for this program.

Mr. Denbowski stated that the Administration has continued to work with NHS on this issue and supports the resolution as presented.

Mr. Miller stated that the changes to the program are to eliminate the age restriction but that NHS would honor the top five senior citizens on the waiting list. He stated that it was discussed in the past to focus on the 10th & Cotton area but the Ricktown project developed in the interim. He stated that this amendment would focus 50% of the funding in the Ricktown area and 50% of the funding to senior citizens City-wide. He

stated that Ricktown is one of NHS's target areas and that the program funding has been reduced to \$75,000.

Mr. Miller explained that using a portion of the funding in the Centre Park area would dilute the work performed and that he has concerns removing the senior status to be eligible for funds. He stated that Centre Park is a very stable neighborhood and recommended that funds be used in the Ricktown area and for seniors City-wide.

Mr. Spencer stated that the Centre Park area has been widened in the Housing Strategy to include N Front – N 5th St and Buttonwood St – Robeson St. He questioned if this was the area that Mr. Miller was referring to. He also questioned the areas which have been targeted by NHS. Mr. Miller stated that NHS has targeted the 6th ward, the 15th ward, the 10th & Cotton area, and the outlet area. He stated that most NHS programs are City-wide and work with community organizers.

Mr. Waltman expressed his belief that Council had approved 50% of the funds for the 10th & Cotton area and 50% for seniors City-wide. He stated that the Administration is pushing the Ricktown area, not Council. He stated that Council has not been completely informed about the Ricktown project and noted the need for clarification.

Mr. Denbowski stated that the Administration recommends 50% of funding be used in the Ricktown area (not the expanded area described by the Housing Strategy) and 50% to seniors City-wide. He stated that the funding will allow seven projects in each area and that the federal reductions have caused the program funding to be reduced to \$75,000. He stated that according to the Community Development office, if this resolution is not adopted the program will be for seniors City-wide only and that if the resolution is amended an additional public comment period will be required.

Mr. Miller clarified that NHS is currently processing eight applications for seniors (with ten on the waiting list) and is currently processing six applications for the Ricktown area. He noted the need to begin rebuilding the Ricktown area.

Mr. Robinson arrived at this time.

Mr. Miller noted the need to protect the projects in that area and build on their momentum. He reminded Council that major system repairs do not have a visible impact on the neighborhood however it will assist residents.

Mayor McMahon arrived at this time.

Ms. Reed expressed the belief that the City is suffering because it is not following urban planning. She stated that strong neighborhoods cannot be allowed to weaken and that

denying assistance to strong neighborhoods is philosophically incorrect. She expressed her belief that if strong neighborhoods are not supported that it will be another nail in the coffin of urban planning. She noted the need for the City to be consistent and follow its comprehensive plan. She expressed her belief that this strategy is a mistake and sets a bad precedent.

Mr. Waltman stated that Council, without complete knowledge of the Ricktown project, is missing the overview of what is being leveraged in this neighborhood. He noted the need for the City to have a baseline for all neighborhoods to continue to strengthen them. He noted that he will follow the lead of the Administration and trust in the bigger plan.

Mr. Spencer questioned how many projects would be funded with \$75,000. Mr. Miller stated that 14 projects could be completed with \$75,000. He expressed his agreement with Ms. Reed but noted that with the decrease in funds he hopes to make the largest possible impact. He stated that substantial leverage has been placed in Ricktown.

Mr. McMahon stated that Barbey playground is in the Ricktown area. He stated that the work done there shows residents that people are willing to work in neighborhoods in need. He stated that 200 volunteers worked there on Saturday and many improvements were made. He stated that Centre Park should not be neglected but that its link with Ricktown will improve Ricktown.

Mr. Sterner stated that he supports the project in Ricktown and noted that there has been much investment in that area which needs to continue. He stated that priorities need to be set and that if there was additional funding, additional projects could be completed. He noted the need to make the largest impact with the funds available.

Mr. Marmarou questioned the number of projects for seniors. Mr. Miller stated that he is processing ten applications, seven will proceed.

Mr. Marmarou questioned where the projects will take place. Mr. Miller stated that they are City-wide and showed the list to Mr. Marmarou. Mr. Marmarou stated that they are generally within two of the target areas.

Mr. Spencer questioned the program for the next fiscal year. Mr. Miller recommended that it remain at 50% in Ricktown and 50% for seniors City-wide.

Mr. Spencer noted that this will create a gap in services available. Mr. Miller stated that the Ricktown plan covers a five year time period. He suggested that Ricktown remain the focus for these five years before moving on to a different neighborhood. He

requested additional funds be allocated to the program in the next year to allow for additional projects. He also stated that HOME funds can be used for this project.

Mr. Sterner noted his support for the concentration of services. He cited the scattered home improvements of Our City Reading as an example of non-concentrated efforts.

Mr. Spencer reminded all of the regulations placed on federal programs.

Mr. Robinson stated that the \$5 million received as part of the NSP II is the result of the application submitted by Mr. Boscov on behalf of the City. He stated that the money must be spent as specified in the application. He welcomed suggestions from Council for future projects.

Ms. Reed noted that the City should stop ignoring the studies and plans which have been compiled in the past. She noted the need to reward those who strengthen neighborhoods. She noted the difficulty seeing the results of the work of Our City Reading's rehabilitation projects. She stated that recently two large homes on Centre Ave sold for under \$100,000.

Mr. Waltman stated that the entire City has eroded. He noted the need for all neighborhoods to be clean and clarified that poor does not need to equal dirty. He stated that the City spends millions of dollars annually and the programs must be better executed.

Mr. Marmarou noted the problems occurring in District 4 which are weakening the neighborhood. He cited examples of rental housing and student homes and stated that one irresponsible owner can cause a downward spiral in a neighborhood.

Mr. McMahon stated that residents need to approach that owner and speak with them about their responsibilities and the neighborhood's expectations.

Mr. Denbowski stated that the Administration requests support of the resolution at this evening's meeting.

Mr. Spencer stated that this resolution appears on this evening's agenda.

II. Weed and Seed Funding

Mr. Denbowski explained that the State has now cut all funding to the Weed and Seed program. He stated that this will directly impact the outlet neighborhood. The Community Prevention Partnership is seeking funding from the City to continue their efforts in this neighborhood. He reviewed the memo from Community Prevention

Partnership which was distributed to Council.

Mr. Johnson arrived at this time.

Mr. Denbowski stated that the memo requests approximately \$22,000 for a fifteen week time period to transition to a new funding source. He stated that the Community Prevention Partnership is confident that a new, sustainable funding source has been identified. He stated that an ordinance recommending an agreement is being introduced this evening. He stated that the Administration requests that Council support the agreement and stated that the Weed and Seed program has been very successful in the past. He noted the need for the teams to be maintained in order to apply for federal funding.

Mr. McMahon stated that the outlet area has a strong community group.

Mr. Denbowski explained that the police identified this area as having a rise in crime.

Mr. Spencer questioned if the current funding was provided by the State. Mr. Denbowski stated that it was until the new State fiscal year when the program was cut. Ms. Reed clarified that they are not funding the program anywhere.

Mr. Spencer questioned if the federal funding of this program ceased. Mr. Denbowski stated that it did.

Mr. Spencer requested a definition of the outlet area. Ms. Kelleher stated that it was N 8th – N 13th St from Oley – Windsor Sts.

Mr. Marmarou stated that this neighborhood group is very diverse and very involved.

Mr. Spencer questioned if the group had representation of the entire area. Mr. Denbowski stated that it did.

Mr. Marmarou stated that the group is making improvements to Lance Place playground.

Mr. Sterner stated his belief that the application process for this neighborhood to become a weed and seed area was incomplete. Mr. Denbowski stated that there was a shift of neighborhoods before the process was complete.

Ms. Reed stated that this means this area is not officially designated as a weed and seed area. Mr. McMahon stated that Community Prevention Partnership continued to carry out the function in this area.

Mr. Waltman questioned if the funding was required to keep the weed and seed designation. Mr. McMahon stated that it has not been designated.

Ms. Reed stated that this request is based on many ifs and that this is not a City core service. She suggested that the funds requested for this program be used to continue core services. She stated that without federal and state assistance that this initiative will not move forward. She noted her appreciation for the effort put forth but stated that the group should continue on its own on a voluntary basis. She stated that there was no guarantee the group would continue beyond the time period of the agreement.

Mr. McMahon explained that the funding will pay the salary of Yvonne Stroman who kept the program focused and moving forward.

Mr. Sterner stated that the neighborhood group is not the weed and seed group and that this is a good stop gap in the interim.

Ms. Reed questioned what would happen at the end of the fifteen weeks and also questioned how the City would know it was getting its money's worth.

Mr. Spencer stated that this area has no designation as a weed and seed area. He questioned where the program received funds before. Mr. Denbowski stated that a grant will be announced in the fall and that the group must continue until the announcement in order to be eligible for the funding. He stated that the weed and seed officer is also no longer paid through this funding and is paid by the City. Mr. McMahon clarified that the officer is being paid through Community Development as a community police officer.

Mr. Waltman calculated that 600 hours is fifteen full time weeks and would provide the director a rate of \$28/hour. He questioned if this would be paid through the general fund. Mr. Denbowski stated that it would be paid from the solid waste education fund.

Mr. Waltman expressed his belief that this is still general fund. He suggested paying for fewer hours or decreasing the hourly wage.

Ms. Reed expressed her belief that weed and seed was no longer a feasible program.

Mr. Sterner suggested that the leader of the outlet area neighborhood group assume the lead on this project until the grant is announced.

Ms. Reed stated that Ms. Stroman also has other responsibilities for Community Prevention Partnership and questioned if she would be working on nothing else these

fifteen weeks. Mr. Denbowski suggested that a time log be submitted.

Ms. Reed stated that time logs are very subjective. She noted that she would like to hear from the City's federal and state representatives about the future of weed and seed funding before Council action is taken. She suggested a phone conference at the next Committee of the Whole. Mr. Denbowski suggested that the Police Chief and Ms. Stroman also attend.

III. Agenda Review

The agenda for this evening's meeting will need to be amended to remove a resolution regarding street paving in the consent agenda and an ordinance being introduced regarding the Housing Permit process.

Council reviewed this evening's agenda including the following:

- Resolution authorizing conditional offers of employment for up to 15 police officers

Ms. Kelleher explained that HIPAA regulations now require a conditional offer of employment before physicals and mental health evaluations can be performed. She stated that Council will then approve the hiring of the specific officers after the evaluations are complete.

Mr. Spencer stated that most officers on the list do not live in the City. Ms. Kelleher stated that City residents do not apply. She questioned the function of the Police Diversity Board.

- Resolutions authorizing the disposition of Community Development and payroll records

Ms. Kelleher recognized the efforts of James Bortz in the disposition of records.

Ms. Reed suggested that Mr. Bortz receive a Commendation at a future meeting.

- Ordinance authorizing a lease agreement with Berks County for a radio tower on Mt. Penn

Mr. Waltman stated that no trees would be lost during construction.

Mr. Spencer stated that there is already enough space available. He stated that discussion on this issue occurred at the June work session.

Mr. Spencer questioned the term of the lease agreement. Mr. Younger stated that it is for a five year term with four, five year extensions unless there is notification to terminate. He stated that 60 days notice to terminate is required.

- Ordinance amending the Human Relations Commission

Mr. Spencer questioned the changes. Ms. Katzenmoyer explained that they were to bring the City's regulations into compliance with the federal Fair Housing regulations.

Ms. Kelleher added that the reduction of commission members is due to difficulty reaching a quorum for meetings.

- Amending the Full Time Position Ordinance at the Waste Water Treatment Plant

Mr. Johnson explained that the duties of the Accountant/Financial Specialist are currently being performed by Hill International. He stated that this position will track the receipt and spending of grant funds used at the WWTP. He stated that the position will be paid through the utilities budget but will be a member of the Administration Services Department.

Mr. Johnson stated that he is currently performing the duties of the superintendent and the utilities engineer. He stated that with the increase in projects being performed he can no longer focus on the day-to-day management of the plant which may become detrimental to compliance.

Mr. Waltman noted he was impressed with the compliance information in the recent report given to Council regarding the WWTP. He requested that Mr. Johnson attend future updates on the project. Mr. Johnson stated that he does attend the updates and that the plant is running on the edge of capacity.

Mr. Johnson stated that the plant must remain reliable and that several team members have recently transferred to other areas. He noted the need for electrical knowledge and the replacement of team members.

Mr. Waltman questioned if the new building project had begun. Mr. Johnson stated that it had not. He explained that he is now requiring staff to be certified.

Mr. Waltman questioned the pay rate for these positions. Mr. Johnson stated that they are competitive with other City positions. He stated that some positions at the WWTP have voluntary certifications and that these employees receive \$1 per hour rate increases for certification.

- Resolution programming \$450,000 in unprogrammed CD funds to the microloan program

Mr. Denbowski requested that this resolution be tabled. He stated that the Administration intends to reallocate the unprogrammed funds to specific projects.

Mr. Spencer stated that the City has outsourced the management of the microloan program. He questioned who was managing the program. Mr. Denbowski stated that he did not have that information at this time.

- Resolution regarding the sale of the Elm View Apartments

Mr. McMahon stated that the City has requested the assistance of the Housing Authority.

Mr. Denbowski requested this resolution be tabled until the details have been finalized.

- Resolution releasing the results of the sewer fund investigation

Ms. Reed suggested that this resolution be tabled until all Council members are present.

The meeting adjourned at 6:40 pm.

Respectfully
Submitted
Linda A. Kelleher, CMC, City Clerk

TO: Thomas McMahon, Mayor of Reading
FROM: Yvonne Stroman, Weed and Seed Site Coordinator
CC: Frank Dembowski, Chief of Staff, City of Reading
Carl Geffken, City Manager
Cheryl Guthier, Executive Director - Community Prevention Partnership of Berks County

Thank you for your consideration of providing continued resources for the coordinator of the Weed and Seed Initiative for the City of Reading. As you know, state funding for Weed and Seed was eliminated from the Governor's Budget. This has put the continuation of the good work that has already been started in the Weed and Seed area in jeopardy. Residents are empowered; youth are participating in evidenced based programs and families are benefitting from research based programs to improve communication with one another. There has been enhanced law enforcement and residents feel better about the relationships they have formed with police. These achievements are the direct result of the implementation of Weed and Seed Initiative and I ask your consideration in the continuation of the work throughout the next several months.

Community Prevention Partnership is seeking funding to maintain the facilitation and coordination of the Reading Weed and Seed Initiative. Job responsibilities for the Weed and Seed Site will Coordinator include:

- Continuation of the recruit of community leaders, residents and resource providers to the Weed & Seed Steering Committee with a particular focus on the Latino Population
- Provide Weed and Seed Orientation Workshops for community residents that will allow for the development of leadership skills.
- Help residents to develop block captains and re-establish a citizen watch group for the targeted area.
- Work with the Neighborhood Revitalization Group to enhance Lance Place Playground
- Provide technical assistance and support to the 4 sub-committees (Law Enforcement; Prevention, Intervention, and Treatment; Community Policing; and Neighborhood Restoration)
- Facilitate the Steering Committee to assess and update the revitalization plan to ensure Weed and Seed efforts coordinate with the Reading Youth Violence Prevention Project's Blue Print for Action.
- Continue to supervise the current Weed and Seed evidence based and research based programs – Daytime Curfew Project; Within My Reach and CASA START, an evidence-based program that provides at-risk youth with adult guidance, positive school experiences, and social supports.
- Evaluate programs and strategies and coordinate the development of a community resource guide for families to identify and locate service providers to assist them with day-to-day needs to combat crime and violence and address the harm they cause to community life.
- Develop and maintain effective working relationships with Reading Youth Violence Prevention Project staff, local leaders and community organizations to gain support and/or resources to provide new social and economic opportunities for the community
- Provide co-facilitation of the National Youth Leadership Training Initiative. Members of Project Peace and 25 high school students will participate in this training. The National

Youth Leadership Initiative offers highly interactive that teach what is required to create and nurture the growth of committed youth leaders and their work within community coalitions. It better equips youth and adults to develop strategic action plans that clearly define the strategies that young people will carry out to address the problems and goals their individual community or coalition is striving to affect.

- Provide support and assistance to the Cease Fire PA Project.
- Seek additional funding to sustain the forts of Weed and Seed beyond the summer months.
- Additionally, if funded I will provide oversight and coordination of the implementation of Communities Mobilizing for Change on Alcohol (CMCA), an evidence-based approach to implementing environmental strategies to decrease underage drinking. CMCA is recognized as an evidence-based program listed under the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) model programs.

The City of Reading, through the Weed & Seed Initiative, is a prime opportunity to address the issues of youth-on-youth violence, neighborhood revitalization, prevention strategies and community policing to improve the quality of life in the targeted area. This approach utilizing a specific targeted area is proven to produce favorable outcomes to reducing violence with an opportunity to expand into other areas of the city. Your consideration in this endeavor is greatly appreciated.

Weed and Seed Initiative Funding Requested

Salary for Yvonne Stroman – 600 hours @ \$28.79/ hour	\$17,274.00
Benefits @ 32%	\$5, 527.68
Total Requested	\$22, 801.68

Explanation of Benefits: These are the standard benefits for employees at Community Prevention Partnership; FICA, Health Insurance inclusive of dental, vision & medical; short term disability; worker's compensation, retirement and group life.